

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00
AID-05 SNM-05 DEAE-00 HA-05 /080 W
-----022725 051727Z /46
P 051629Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8823

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ARA/AND FOR AMBASSADOR ASECIO FROM CHARGE

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: CO
SUBJ: CONTACTS WITH COLOMBIAN MILITARY CHIEFS

1. THIS MORNING I INTRODUCED COLONEL DULL, THE NEW DAO, TO THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY HIGH COMMAND IN A CEREMONY THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE DFENSE MINISTRY. GENERAL CAMACHO, THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES, PRESIDED AND THERE WAS A GOOD TURN-OUT OF OTHER GENERALS PLUS ADMIRAL ALZATE. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS VERY CORDIAL AND WE TAKE THIS AS A SIGN THAT OUR MISSION'S RELATIONS WITH THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT ARE STILL SATISFACTORY, AT THE LEAST, BECAUSE GENERAL CAMACHO WOULD HAVE HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT MAKING ANY NEGATIVE FEELINGS THEY MIGHT HAVE QUITE OBVIOUS TO US.

2. CAMCHO, HOWEVER, REITERATED HIS CONCERNS ABOUT THE FMS PROBLEM AND AGAIN PRESSED FOR INFORMATION ON WHEN A DECISION WILL BE MADE IN WASHINGTON ON THIS MATTER. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE RECOGNIZED AND WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLANNING PROBLEMS THAT THEY WERE SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF THE DELAY IN DECISION-MAKING AND THAT WE ALSO UNDERSTOOD AND WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE

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DAMAGE THAT COULD BE CAUSED BY AN SUBSTANTIAL SHORTALL IN THE FMS CREDIT. CAMACHO REMARKED UNHAPPILY THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT HEAR ANYTHING UNTIL YOU RETURNED. I TOLD HIM THAT YOU HAD ALREADY BEEN CONSULTING IN WASHINGTON ON THIS CASE AND PRESSING FOR A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. I PROMISED HIM THAT I WOULD REPORT OUR CONVERSATION TO YOU RIGHT AWAY AND LET HIM KNOW AS SOON AS WE RECEIVED FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE FMS CREDIT.

3. OF RELATED INTEREST, GENERAL CAMACHO ATTENDED OUR FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION LAST NIGHT. THIS IS UNUSUAL FOR HIM AND IT HAS BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE WE HAVE HAD ANY COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES PRESENT AT SUCH A RECEPTION. AIR FORCE COMMANDANT GENERAL RODRIGUEZ WAS ALSO THERE, ALONG WITH VICE ADMIRAL MELENDEZ. PRIOR TO THE RECEPTION, WE HAD LEARNED THAT CAMACHO WAS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT THE CHANGES IN THE STAFFING OF OUR MILGROUP BUT I TAKE IT FROM HIS ATTENDANCE AND HIS VERY FRIENDLY MANNER THAT COLONEL BAUER'S DEPARTURE FROM THE MILGROUP IS NOW REGARDED BY CAMACHO AS PAST HISTORY. AS YOU MAY KNOW, GEN MCAULIFFE ASSIGNED LTCOL HUSKIE HERE TO HEAD THE ARMY COMPONENT OF THE MILGROUP JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER COLONEL BAUER WAS RELIEVED. HE IS VERY EXPERIENCED IN HIS WORK AND HAS ALREADY DEVELOPED A VERY GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS. COLONEL WITTENBERG REMAINS IN CHARGE OF THE OVERALL MILGROUP AND IN A RECENT VISIT TO THE CANAL ZONE HE SCORED A MAJOR COUP IN OBTAINING ADDITIONAL TRAINING FUNDS FOR THE COLOMBIAN NAVY. FUNDS THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN AVAILABLE HAD BEEN FROZEN AS A RESULT OF A DECISION REACHED BETWEEN COLONEL BAUER AND THE COLOMBIAN JOINT STAFF OF GENERALS. THE PROVISION OF THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR TRAINING IS THEREFORE AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN RESTORING THE COLOMBIAN NAVY'S PREVIOUS COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS US. MEANWHILE, CAPT FOWLER HAS GONE ON A MONTHS LEAVE BUT THE NAVY SIDE OF THE MILGROUP IS BEING ABLY HANDLED BY MARINE COLONEL GANNON.

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4. I ALSO WANT TO REPORT THAT ON JUNE 13 COLONEL BAUER HAD A MEETING WITH GENERAL ROBLEDO IN WHICH HE RAISED THE SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE JOINT EFFORTS ON MARIHUANA ERADICATION. ROBLEDO PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN THE JOINT STAFF AND IT IS THOUGHT THAT HE MAY GO ON TO AN EVEN HIGHER-RANKING POSITION SOON. COLONEL BAUER SAID THAT ROBLEDO SPOKE AUTHORITATIVELY IN FAVOR OF THE MARIHUANA ERADICATION PROGRAM AND HE RENEWED ASSURANCES THAT THE ARMED FORCES COMMANDER AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER WERE ALSO SOLIDLY BEHIND IT. SPEAKING IN YOUR BEHALF, BAUER ASSURED ROBLEDO THAT SUCH A PROGRAM WAS STILL THE SUBJECT OF ACTIVE CONSIDERATION ON THE PART OF THE USG AND THAT YOU WOULD PROBABLY BE COMMUNICATING WITH THE GOC ON IT UPON YOUR RETURN TO COLOMBIA.

DREXLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA06294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780276-0058
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780796/aaaaddq.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 35b47c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2119937
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTACTS WITH COLOMBIAN MILITARY CHIEFS
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, CO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/35b47c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014